

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TEL AV 02051 01 OF 02 071623Z

43

ACTION H-01

INFO OCT-01 SS-07 ISO-00 NSC-06 NEA-06 NSCE-00 /021 W

----- 023678

P 071439Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6200

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 2051

LIMDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (CAPTION SHOULD READ LIMDIS VICE EXDIS)

DEPT PLS PASS AMB KEATING; DEPT PLS REPEAT AS APPROPRIATE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, IS, XF

SUBJ: DEFENSE MINISTER PERES' MEETING WITH CODEL O'NEILL

1. SUMMARY: DEFENSE MINISTER PERES MET WITH CODEL O'NEILL FOR AN HOUR AND A HALF ON APRIL 4. IN A CALM AND UNEMOTIONAL FASHION, DEFMIN EXPLAINED ISRAEL'S CONCERNS ABOUT HER SECURITY AND THEN GAVE ISRAELI VERSION OF THE PROGRESSION OF THE RECENT TALKS, ACCUSING EGYPT OF SOLE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR FAILURE. PERES ARGUED THAT ISRAEL HAD MADE REASONABLE OFFERS, WITH EGYPT HAD REJECTED. IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, ISRAEL HAD BEEN ASKED TO GIVE UP ITS ONLY TANGIBLE BARGAINING ASSETS, STRATEGICALLY VALUABLE TERRITORY, FOR NOTHING IN RETURN. IN COURSE OF LONG GIVE AN TAKE QUESTION PERIOD, PERES, IN IMPRESSIVELY ARTICULATE AND REASONED FASHION, GAVE FAMILIAR GOI POSITIONS ON NATURE OF ARAB THREAT, SOVIET INTENTIONS IN MIDDLE EAST, NEED FOR US AID, ETC. CODEL'S QUESTIONS REFLECTED CONCERN AT ABSENCE OF PROGRESS IN NEGOTIATIONS. CODEL EXPLAINED THAT IN CURRENT DIFFICULT ECONOMIC SITUATION, AMERICAN PUBLIC'S RECEPTIVITY TO PROVIDING US AID WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE CONDITIONED BY WILLINGNESS OF PARTIES CONCERNED TO MAKE CONCESSIONS REQUIRED FOR SOME RESOLUTION OF

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TEL AV 02051 01 OF 02 071623Z

CONFLICT. PERES MADE DIGNIFIED RESPONSES, ADMITTING

THAT HE DIDN'T HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS, BUT THAT "IF THE US CAN'T OR WON'T MAKE THIS EFFORT, THE WORLD WILL BELONG TO THE RUSSIANS." END SUMMARY.

2. PERES BEGAN MEETING WITH CODEL BY EXPRESSING ISRAEL'S PROFOUND THANKS FOR THE HELP WHICH THE US WAS PROVIDING AND HAD PROVIDED IN THE PAST. HE SAID THAT THE CURRENT INTERNATIONAL SITUATION WAS DIFFICULT FOR SMALL NATIONS STRUGGLING TO SURVIVE AGAINST HOSTILE NEIGHBORS, BECAUSE MODERN TECHNOLOGY, FINANCIAL STRENGTH AND SIZE OF POPULATION COUNT FOR SO MUCH IN THE BATTLE FOR SURVIVAL. HE BRIEFLY COMPARED ISRAEL'S FORCES WITH THOSE OF HER HOSTILE NEIGHBORS, STRESSING THAT ISRAEL HAD TO COMPENSATE FOR ITS NUMERICAL INFERIORITY AND GEOGRAPHIC VULNERABILITY BY RELYING ON FORTIFICATIONS DESIGNED TO PERMIT HER ARMY TIME TO HOLD OFF THE ENEMY AND TO MOBILIZE SHOULD SHE BE ATTACKED AGAIN AS IN OCTOBER 1973. (CODEL HAD SPENT MORNING ON TOUR OF GOLAN HEIGHTS WHERE THEY HAD RECEIVED BRIEFING ON IMPORTANCE OF THAT TERRAIN BY CHIEF OF STAFF MORDECHAI GUR.)

3. TURNING TO THE RECENT NEGOTIATIONS PERES SAID THE ISSUES COULD BE BOILED DOWN TO TWO FACTORS: TIME AND LINKAGE. ISRAEL HAD BEEN WILLING TO MAKE LARGE CONCESSIONS IN A VARIETY OF CIRCUMSTANCES; BUT ANY AGREEMENT HAD TO BE OF SUFFICIENT DURATION THAT ISRAEL COULD REST ASSURED THAT ITS IMMENSELY COSTLY DEFENSIVE POSITIONS ON THE GROUND WOULD NOT REQUIRE CONSTANT CHANGE. ISRAEL COULD NOT AFFORD THIS EITHER FINANCIALLY OR PSYCHOLOGICALLY. THE GOI HAD ALSO CONCLUDED THAT AN AGREEMENT WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE UNLESS IT WAS CLEAR THAT IT WAS NOT LINKED TO SYRIA. THE GOI COULD NOT RULE OUT DECEPTION, WHATEVER MIGHT BE THE VIEWS OF OTHERS ABOUT EGYPTIAN MODERATION. IT COULD NOT AGREE TO GIVE UP SIGNIFICANT STRATEGIC POSITIONS UNLESS EGYPT AGREED THAT A SYRIAN ATTACK AGAINST ISRAEL WOULD NOT INVALIDATE THE AGREEMENT.

4. NEITHER OF THESE VITAL ISRAELI CONDITIONS, PERES
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TEL AV 02051 01 OF 02 071623Z

SAID, COULD BE MADE DURING THE TALKS. THIS FORCED ISRAEL TO CONCLUDE THAT EGYPT DID NOT REALLY WANT AN AGREEMENT. HE THEN BRIEFLY RECOUNTED THE ISRAELI VERSION OF THE PROGRESS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS ALONG FAMILIAR LINES. AS TO THE FUTURE, PERES SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT SOMETHING HAD TO GIVE ON BOTH SIDES. FROM ISRAEL'S POINT OF VIEW IT WAS NOT PREPARED TO CHANGE ITS NEGOTIATING POSITION UNLESS IT HAD GROUNDS

TO THINK THAT THE EGYPTIANS SINCERELY DESIRED AN AGREEMENT. HE SUGGESTED THAT IF THE SUEZ CANAL WAS INDEED OPENED ON JUNE 5, THE GOI MIGHT COME FORWARD WITH "EVEN MORE FORTHCOMING PROPOSALS" THAN IT HAD DURING THE RECENT TALKS.

5. DURING A QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION LASTING MORE THAN AN HOUR FOLLOWING HIS PRESENTATION, PERES COMMENTED ON THE FOLLOWING:

A. STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS--WHEN ASKED IF GOI HAD NOT CHANGED ITS POLICY OF ACCEPTING STEP-BY-STEP NEGOTIATIONS, PERES SAID NO. ISRAEL WOULD GO BACK TO NEGOTIATIONS IF ASKED BY US OR EGYPTIANS. HE DESCRIBED THE ISRAELI POSITION AS FUNDAMENTALLY UNCHANGED FROM THE ONE IT TOOK DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS, WHICH HE THEN UNDERTOOK TO DEFEND AND EXPLAIN. PERES SAID THAT THE GOE POSITION HAD HARDENED BEFORE AND DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS BECAUSE (1) THEY BELIEVED ISRAEL WAS WEAK, (2) THEY EXPECTED AN IMPROVEMENT IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIETS AND (3) THEY THOUGHT THEY COULD GET AWAY WITH IT. NEVERTHELESS, ISRAEL WAS STILL WILLING TO SEE THREE OPTIONS DEVELOPED: (1) A MAJOR SETTLEMENT, IN WHICH

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TEL AV 02051 02 OF 02 071539Z

43

ACTION H-01

INFO OCT-01 SS-07 ISO-00 NSC-06 NEA-06 NSCE-00 /021 W

----- 023110

P 071439Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6201

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEL AVIV 2051

LIMDIS

ISRAEL WOULD WITHDRAW FROM THE BULK OF SINAI, IF THE LATTER WAS SUBSTANTIALLY DEMILITARIZED AND FREEDOM OF NEGOTIATIONS IN THE STRAITS OF TIRAN WAS GUARANTEED; (2) RETURN OF THE PASSES AND OIL FIELDS (HE CLAIMED THE

DETAILS WERE NOT THE IMPORTANT THING) IN RETURN FOR NON-BELLIGERENCY OR A NON-USE OF FORCE AGREEMENT OF SUBSTANTIAL DURATION; OR (3) RETURN OF PART OF THE PASSES AND EGYPTIAN ADMINISTRATION OF THE OIL FIELDS IF SOME EGYPTIAN CONCESSIONS WERE MADE (SPECIFICALLY, HE SAID THAT GOI HAD ASKED DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS THAT GOE ARMED FORCES NOT BE MOVED FORWARD IN STRENGTH, THAT ECONOMIC BOYCOTT BE RELAXED, THAT HOSTILE PROPAGANDA BE REDUCED. HE ALSO MENTIONED THE GOI PROPOSAL FOR JOINT PATROLS AND EARLY WARNING STATIONS IN ANY UN CONTROLLED FUBBER AREA). PERES FORCEFULLY EMPHASIZED THAT EGYPT HAD REJECTED ALL ISRAELI PROPOSALS.

PERES INSISTED THAT ISRAEL HAD TO DRAW ITS OWN CONCLUSIONS FROM THE POSITIONS TAKEN BY THE GOE DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS. HE THOUGHT SADAT WAS TRYING TO DRIVE A WEDGE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE US BY PLAYING IN A COMPETITION FOR THE SUPPORT OF AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION, A KIND OF NUMBERS GAME WHERE SADAT APPEARED SWEET AND REASONABLE, WHILE OFFERING NOTHING, WHILE ISRAEL WAS MADE TO APPEAR INTRANSIGENT, THOUGH IT WAS GIVING UP ITS MAIN NEGOTIATING CARDS.

B. GENEVA--PERES SAID THAT TALK ABOUT A GENEVA CONFERENCE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TEL AV 02051 02 OF 02 071539Z

HAD STIFFENED THE GOE POSITION DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS. THIS WAS UNFORTUNATE BUT PROBABLY COULD NOT BE HELPED. THE GOI WAS NOT AFRAID OF GENEVA (HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE CARDS WOULD BE STACKED AGAINST ISRAEL THERE) BUT WAS FUNDAMENTALLY CONVINCED THAT ANY ACCEPTABLE AGREEMENT WOULD IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS SOMEHOW HAVE TO BE NEGOTIATED DIRECTLY BETWEEN THE PARTIES CONCERNED.

C. SOVIET INVOLVEMENT--PERES EMPHASIZED THE SOVIET THREAT TO BOTH ISRAEL AND THE US. HE MADE A STRONG CASE THAT THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MUCH OF THE TENSION THAT EXISTED IN THE AREA OVER THE YEARS SINCE 1954 HAD BEEN DUE TO SOVIET ARMS SUPPLY POLICY. HE SAID THAT IF THE SOVIETS WERE EVER ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN A SETTLEMENT BY STATIONING TROOPS IN THE AREA THEY WOULD NEVER LEAVE THE MIDDLE EAST.

D. US ASSISTANCE--IN RESPONSE TO CODEL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE AMOUNT AND DURATION OF ISRAEL'S REQUIREMENTS FOR US ASSISTANCE, PERES SAID THAT HE RECOGNIZED US ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES AND THAT ISRAELI REQUIREMENTS WERE VERY LARGE. NEVERTHELESS, UNLESS THE SITUATION CHANGED ISRAEL HAD TO HAVE THIS ASSISTANCE IF IT WAS TO BE ABLE

TO SURVIVE WITHOUT HAVING TO RELY ON DIRECT US
MILITARY INTERVENTION IN A POSSIBLE FUTURE CONFLICT.
THIS ALTERNATIVE HE THOUGHT WAS NEITHER IN THE US NOR
THE ISRAELI INTEREST. ALL ISRAEL ASKED FOR WAS ASSISTANCE
IN MAINTAINING A RATIO OF ONE TO THREE IN THE
ISRAEL-ARAB ARMS BALANCE. HE THEN ADDED, WITH
EMPHASIS, "IF THE US CAN'T OR WON'T MAKE THIS EFFORT
HERE, THE WORLD WILL BELONG TO THE RUSSIANS."

E. 1967 BORDERS--IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ABOUT THE
DEFENSIBILITY OF ISRAEL'S 1967 BORDERS, PERES SAID
FLATLY THAT THEY COULD NOT BE DEFENDED. THIS DID NOT
MEAN, HE SAID, THAT ISRAEL COULD NOT WITHDRAW FROM
PARTS OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, BUT RATHER THAT,
FROM A STRICTLY MILITARY POINT OF VIEW, THE 67 BORDERS
SIMPLY COULD NOT BE DEFENDED.

VELIOTES
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TEL AV 02051 02 OF 02 071539Z

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PFOR
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975TELAV02051
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750473/aaaacpcr.tel
Line Count: 246
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION H
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS, EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS, EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <28 NOV 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEFENSE MINISTER PERES' MEETING WITH
TAGS: US, IS, XF
To: SECSTATE WASHDC
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006